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PROBE OF INTELLIGENCE

Though President Kennedy has accepted broad responsibility, the question of just how to allocate blame for the abortive Cuban invasion is one that historians will have to resolve on the basis of the full record. In the meantime, there can be little doubt that faulty assessments by the Central Intelligence Agency played a big part in bringing about the fiasco.

Reports from reliable sources indicate that the CIA set far too low an estimate on the military strength of the Castro government, and on its ability to keep the Cuban people in line. There also have been reliable indications that the CIA considerably over-estimated the extent to which Cubans on the island would rise up against the regime in the event of an invasion.

Even after due allowance has been made for the difficulties of accurate assessment, these misjudgements must be considered serious intelligence failures. It is clear that personnel and procedures of the CIA should be subjected to the most rigorous scrutiny.

Happily, such a reappraisal is being undertaken by the administration. It is reported that not only the CIA, but the entire process of politico-military assessments and the making of decisions based on those assessments, is under review. This is a sound approach to the imperative task of preventing another such mixup as that involved in the Cuban rebel landings. Parceling out blame is far less important than guarding against future situations of this kind.